Pondering upon the Qur'an

So they set out, until when they met a boy, al-Khidhr killed him. [Moses] said, "Have you killed a pure soul for other than [having killed] a soul? You have certainly done a deplorable thing." (18:74)

***

And as for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared that he would overburden them by transgression and disbelief. So we intended that their Lord should substitute for them one better than him in purity and nearer to mercy. (18:80-81)

Shaykh Musa Jibril

Pondering upon the Qur'an

—Shaykh Musa Abdullah Jibril

All Praise is due to Allah [alone], we praise Him, seek His Aid [in our affairs], His Guidance, and His Forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves, and from our evil actions. Whosoever Allah guides, then surely, he is guided. And whosoever Allah misguides, then he will never find anyone to guide him. And I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship, but Allah alone, without any partners [in His Lordship and Worship]. And I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is His slave and Messenger.

O mankind, be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him, he created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women. And fear Allah through Whom you demand your [mutual] rights, and [do not cut the relations of] the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever All-Watcher over you.

O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak [always] the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger ﷺ has indeed achieved a great achievement.

As for what follows:

Verily, the most truthful of speech, is the Speech of Allah, and the best guidance, is the guidance of Muhammad ﷺ and the most evil affairs are the newly invented matters, and every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the hellfire. All praise is due to Allah, and may the Salah and Salam be upon Allah's Messenger.

Today's lecture is about an Ayah, and I swear by Allah, if you truly contemplated it with me, you will be the happiest in this life, and Allah will make you happy in the hereafter. We will soon discuss the Ayah, but first — let us discuss [the meaning of] tadabur.

What is tadabur of the Qur'an?

After we understand this we will go over the Ayah I am referring to. The goal of having tadabur of the Qur'an is understanding it — understanding what is being read. He [who reads it] knows the meaning and grasps it, and he treats the Qur'an as if he was living with it, as if it came down to him (i.e., he applies everything he reads from it in his life). Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) commanded us to do tadabur. Verily, the most tr tadabur —

The west says that Muslims don't read. This is not true. The people who read most are the Muslims. Muslims read more than any other nation because they read the Qur'an — and it is the

Knowledge and Speech of Allah. This is different than what they read, whether it's fiction or non-fiction, stories and tales or fables. We read the Qur'an. There is no house, whether in Ramadan or outside Ramadan — except that the whole Qur'an is recited once or twice a month. We read the Speech of Allah. And reading the Qur'an is superior than reading anything else.

So, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) commanded us to make tadabur of the Qur'an, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) also criticized those who do not make tadabur of the Qur'an — the polytheists being among them. The Qur'an challenged the Arabs during the time of the Messenger ﷺ: Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts? — Either they reflect upon the Qur'an, or their hearts are blinded. Ibn Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه) said: *"Whoever desires the knowledge of those who came first and last, then let him reflect upon the Qur'an."*

Qur'an, Knowledge is not what most people say and read nowadays, it is as Ibn Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه) said. Ibn Al-Qayyim also says: *"Reading one Ayah with contemplation is better than reading a khitmah (recitation of the whole Qur'an) with no contemplation."* . If you do not read this Qur'an meaningfully, without contemplation — it will not benefit you in anything. The Qur'an always needs to be reflected and contemplated upon, and the meaning needs to be understood. It is narrated that Ibn 'Abbas stood the night in prayer reflecting upon one Ayah only. Some people do not finish reciting the Qur'an in a span of two to three years, why? Because they are reflecting upon it — stopping after every Ayah and contemplating its meaning. The Ayah that Ibn 'Abbas stood a full night in prayer reading is —

The goal for reflecting upon the Qur'an is to understand the meaning, to live by it — as if the Ayah descended upon the one reading it. The Messenger ﷺ stood the night in prayer reflecting upon one Ayah.

Reflecting upon the Qur'an is beneficial

Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. A person cannot find assurance or tranquility except by reading the Qur'an — he understands the meaning and is humbled by it — his body trembles when he reads it. It increases iman and benefits the heart, and adds to the pleasantness of [reading] the Qur'an. The Qur'an has a sweetness and pleasantness to it, it takes root [in the heart] — for it is the speech of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). Everyone who reads the Qur'an should understand its meaning. As for extrapolating (i.e., evidences/proofs) — that is left to the scholars. Because the majority of everything that happens is included in the Qur'an: We have neglected nothing in the Book.

The will of Allah

Nothing happens in this world, on this Earth — everything under the Sovereignty of Allah, except by the Will of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). Even all these transgressions, corruption, and wickedness, are by the permission of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). The scholars have divided the occurrences of things into two:

(1) The Shar'i Will — and it is associated with what is commanded and prohibited.
Like fasting, and abstaining from fawahish (immoralities) and avoiding them, and avoiding the impermissible. The Command of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is the Shar'i Will — Allah loves this. Allah loves for the believer to have this. When He Ordained prayer: And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. Allah created us to worship Him. Allah wants whoever is on this Earth to worship Him. This is the Shari'i Will. Allah Loves this, regardless if it happens or not — because some people obey Allah while others do not.

(2) The second will is the Universal Will, everything that Allah decreed — Whether He Loves it or does not Love it.
And He does not approve for His servants disbelief. Allah does not approve for them disbelief, however they approved it for themselves. It happened by Allah's permission, however Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) does not approve of it. Abu Hanifah once asked Zain Al-'Abideen (رضي الله عنه): "Has our Lord approved of sins?" — Abu Hanifa is shocked from all the wickedness, transgressions, and bloodshed in the world. Does this happen despite Allah knowing of it? Is He disobeyed without His permission? No, nothing happens except with His permission. Allah does not approve of it, but it did not happen except with His permission. If Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) wills for something then it is Be, and it is. The Universal Will must — and will happen. The Shari'i Will does not necessarily happen. The difference between the two Wills is that one must happen, while the other does not always happen due to some people obeying and others disobeying. This is the Universal and Shari'i Will.

Tests and trials

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) created humankind to Test them. And there are trials, as mentioned in the Ayah previously, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) does not leave the believers in their present state until He tests them. It is said that there was a town that had a beautiful girl called Leylah. All of the boys proclaimed that they loved her and she them. Everyone said they love Leylah. They all declared a connection with her, yet Leylah did not recognize anything of it. Not a single one of the boys was truthful.

Just like the different sects we have today, seventy-three sects [that emerged] from the 'Ummah of Dawah. The 'Ummah that answered the call of the Messenger ﷺ. Seventy-three — all in Hellfire. They pray in front of you, beside you, behind you, or are calling to the prayer. Allah

(سبحانه وتعالى) does not leave people until He Tries them. Allah does not leave humankind in their present state until He separates the evil from the good. Allah already knows the evil from the good, 50,000 years before He Created Adam. He knows, yet He Proves to us [the truth of ourselves] when we are tested, and the angels write down our actions. For this reason, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) (tests humankind with trials.

Times of calamity

And people during times of calamity are of different types. Most become angry and say, 'What did I do? What did I do so that Allah has done this to me?' And sometimes there is anger against Allah in the heart, and this takes them out of the folds of Islam, and they turn away from Islam, and are lead to disbelief. There is also anger in speech, like asking for the destruction [of oneself] and despairing. And some women slap their cheeks, tear their clothes, and pull out their hair. The other type of people is those who are patient. Indeed, Allah is with the patient. Allah saves the patient ones from the reckoning on the Day of Judgement, this is the excellent level [they reach].

And there is a level better than that of patience, and it is very rare that we see it. And it is a level acquired during times of calamity, that a person knows everything that befalls him is from Allah — that it was to test him. He has a level in paradise that he cannot reach through his actions alone, so Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) puts him through trials, calamities — both specific and general. General calamities are like the illness that is present today, or floods, or aids. Specific calamities are those that strike an individual, in his body, his wealth, or his family. The Messenger ﷺ mentioned that these calamities are — to the believer, the one who fulfills their five daily prayers in their appointed times, he fasts Ramadan, he does not neglect the religious obligations and he stays clear from the forbidden — This is who the Messenger ﷺ is referring to: *"Never a believer is stricken with a discomfort, an illness, an anxiety, a grief or mental worry or even the pricking of a thorn but Allah will expiate his sins on account of his patience."*

Why? It is just like how he ﷺ also mentioned: "*How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer...*". Whatever happens to the believer is good for him. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) tests the believer — everything that happens to a believer is good for him. He removes his sins [through the difficulties of trials]. When a believer sins and is hit with trials — it wakes him up from the state of heedlessness.

The one Ayah one should ponder over

Now I will mention the Ayah — if we pondered over it and understood its meaning, all the difficulties of this life will be made easy — one Ayah, if we pondered over it and understood it, all the matters of this life will be made easy, and we will be happy in this life and Allah will make us happy in the Hereafter. What is the Ayah? It is a story very well known in the Qur'an — and I will mention this Ayah and its exegesis.

Musa (عليه السلام) was with Khidr and Joshua was with them as well. Musa (عليه السلام) was travelling with Khidr. When Musa was traveling with Khidr, there was a boy of five or six years of age. Khidr killed the boy by cutting his head off. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) did not create anything, nor decree anything except with Hikmah (Wisdom). Sometimes we know the wisdom, and the rest of times we do not. Some of the scholars extrapolated: Musa (عليه السلام) did not know the wisdom behind this boy's killing, he objected Khidr's action — He said, "Have you killed an innocent person who had killed none?..."

If one of the nations of today announced that it will kill a child of five years, by Allah you will not see anyone from the east or west — magian or christian or Muslim, except that they objected and condemned this action. Because this is the nature we were created in. Allah created us with an upright nature. How can you kill a boy of five years? This is a great evil! This was Musa's (عليه السلام) reaction. It is a great calamity for the mother and father, a son of five years was killed. No one would be pleased with this. However, the wisdom behind this incident was revealed to us. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) has the Wisdom.

The purpose of calamity

All of the calamities that befall you have two purposes, a purpose that you know of, and a purpose that is hidden from you. If Khidr did not mention it to Musa, we would have never known the wisdom behind it. Look at the wisdom and lesson [derived] from this incident and listen to what Khidr told Musa (عليه السلام) before they separated: This Ayah is Khidr revealing the wisdom behind killing the boy, to Musa (عليه السلام) before they separated. As we mentioned if a child his age is killed the world would go mad, this [reaction] is the nature Allah created humankind with, and it is a sound nature. However, there is always another side to things — a wisdom that Allah knows and we do not. Some of the scholars extrapolate from this: For example, if we approached the father of a child and told him from the beginning, "He will be disobedient towards you and lead you and his mother to Hellfire. Let us kill this boy and give you a child better than him, a child who is obedient. This child is disobedient and will enter you into Hellfire, he will greatly influence you in this life and the next. We will exchange him with another child who will be obedient and lead you to Paradise, and will help you in the matters of this life."

Do you think this father will agree to this offer or not? The answer is yes, he will. Any one of us with a sound mind would agree to this offer. This is the Wisdom of Allah, and He has Wisdom that we know not about. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is not asked about what He does, and they (the creation) are asked. If Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) revealed to us the unseen we would have submitted [to it] and preferred it, and we would be pleased with it — like the situation of the boy who was killed. How much kindness is hidden with Allah Whose obscurity is reduced with the understanding of the intelligent? How many matters are troubling in the morning, and happiness follows them by nightfall?

Allah's Wisdom

The student of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: If Allah removed the veils (He revealed to us the wisdom in all our affairs, and the calamities that befall us) of the slave (we are referring to the committed believer who obeys Allah in what He commanded and abstains from disobeying Allah) — If Allah removed the veils of the slave, and made apparent to him how He Manages his affairs, and how Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is most protective over the interests of His slave (meaning Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is more protective over His slaves interest than His slave is over his own interests, and that Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is more merciful to his slave than his own mother) — then his heart would melt out of love for Allah, and his heart would be cut into pieces out of thankfulness to Allah.

So, if this boy (that Khidr killed) lived — he would have driven his parents to disbelief. They were two righteous believers. If this child remained with them he would have been the cause of their disbelief (i.e., the boy was destined to be a disbeliever, and their love for him would make them follow him in disbelief). Allah has Wisdom, everything has a wisdom behind it — even if we do not know it. Allah does not inform us of the wisdom behind every calamity that befalls us, but in this story Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) made the wisdom apparent to us because Khidr was commanded to kill this boy.

If this boy stayed alive and was raised [into an adult], his parents would become disbelievers. The boy was killed at a young age — therefore Allah saved his parents from disbelief. If the wisdom was made apparent to his parents, they would have agreed to it — but the wisdom was not made apparent. Allah does not reveal the wisdom for every matter or every calamity that befalls us. Nor will Allah disclose to you the secrets of the Ghaib (unseen). Wisdom, there is wisdom as we saw in this event that happened.

Reflection upon one's calamities

So, if you reflect upon this with every calamity that befalls you, you will know that Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) has Wisdom in everything. If a person were to pore over this and the wisdom behind it, he would be pleased and be the happiest of people. [Knowing] That Allah does everything with , and that it is in His slave's best interest — even if the wisdom is not made apparent.

Pondering over this one Ayah and poring over it, if the person doing so has a sound mind he will not ever worry about anything — whatever befalls him he will thank Allah. Always praise be to Allah! Allah wanted this for me because Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) does not want for the believer except good. However, we do not know where the good lies in. Every person is affected by calamities — however if the believer ponders over this Ayah alone, he will be pleased with what Allah prepared for him.

If Allah revealed to the people the reason for their calamities they would always be pleased. [That is

why] We are pleased with what Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) has written for us, and we praise Allah (سبحانه وتعالى). Because the Messenger ﷺ said: *"How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything..."* — There is nothing that befalls a believer, except that it is good for him. There is good for him in everything, always and forever. *"How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything..."* And may the peace and blessings be upon Muhammad, and upon his family, his companions, and whoever follows him with sincerity in striving for perfection till the Day of Judgement.